WASHINGTON, DC -- U.S. Rep. Vern Buchanan's bill to combat prescription drug abuse and crack down on Florida's sprawling pill mill industry was introduced in the House with broad bipartisan support from senior members in both parties.

Buchanan's bill, "The Pill Mill Crackdown Act of 2011," includes provisions to: support state-based prescription drug monitoring programs; use the money from seized illicit operations for drug treatment; strengthen prescription standards for certain addictive pain drugs; and toughen prison terms and fines for pill mill operators.

Among the House leaders co-sponsoring Buchanan's legislation are Appropriations Chairman Hal Rogers (KY-05); Foreign Affairs Chairwoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (FL-18); Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman John Mica (FL-07); Veterans' Affairs Chairman Jeff Miller (FL-01); Ways & Means Chairman Dave Camp (MI-04); and Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Darrell Issa (CA-49) .

In addition, the Co-chairs of the Congressional Caucus on Prescription Drug Abuse, Mary Bono-Mack (R-Calif), and Stephen Lynch, (D-Mass), co-sponsored the measure as did senior House Democrat Ed Markey (D-Mass). Florida Democrats Debbie Wasserman-Schultz (FL-20), Corinne Brown (FL-03), Ted Deutch (FL-19), and Frederica Wilson (FL-17) also are co-sponsors.

Specifically, Buchanan's Bill would:

• Toughen federal penalties for pill mill operators by doubling the prison sentence from 10 to 20 years and tripling the fine from $1 million to $3 million.

• Stipulate that assets seized from violators be used to: fund drug monitoring databases in the states; fund DEA enforcement actions against Pill Mills; and, support drug treatment programs within the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The DEA last month seized an estimated $2.5 million in illicit assets owned by pill mill owners in South Florida.

• Reclassify hydrocodone combination drugs (one of the most addictive and dangerous drug mixtures) to make them a Schedule II drug that is more difficult to prescribe and obtain.